



MUSCOGEE NATION NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION AND A PRODUCTION OF MVSKOKE MEDIA

Mvskoke Etlwv festival brings international spotlight to MCN

Mvskoke life showcased at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

Rebecca Landsberry
MNN Editor

WASHINGTON — More than 160 Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) citizens attended the Native American Heritage Month Family Celebration: Mvskoke Etlwv at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C., Nov. 15-17.

The festival featured a variety of Muscogee (Creek) artists, stomp dance demonstrations, Mvskoke hymn singing and storytelling. Also included were informational booths with representatives from several tribal programs and services showcasing the tribe's government, and speaking panels on the Ocmulgee to Okmulgee Bicycle Tour, Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard and Mvskoke veterans.

MCN departments represented included Lighthorse Police, Reintegration, Mvskoke Media, Southern Regional Office, Vet-



MNN/Sterling Cospier

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation flag flew in front of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and was seen by international visitors during the Native American Heritage Month Family Celebration: Mvskoke Etlwv in Washington D.C., just down the street from the U.S. Capitol Building.

eran Affairs Service Office, Family Violence Prevention, Tourism & Recreation, Citizenship, JOM, Environmental Services, Housing Division, Community Research & Development and the Division of Health.

According to NMAI Cultural Arts Program Specialist Vincent

Scott, the museum's mission focuses on showcasing native nations from North, Central and South America. Asst. Director Cameron McGuire spoke on behalf of NMAI at the opening ceremony.

"This is Native American Heritage Month so it is very fitting that you're here and it's also the time

when we celebrate veterans... It's important for our visitors, it's important to the minds in the Capitol here, that the strong presence of Indian Country is represented as often as possible here in the museum," McGuire said.

SEE CAPITOL - 2

DEC. 12, 2012
VOL. 42, ISSUE 23
"RVFO RAKKO"
BIG WINTER MONTH



Council approves Expo name deal at Nov. 17 session

Gary Fife
MNN Editorial Assistant

Muscogee (Creek) Nation veterans marched to show their support for legislation granting an increase in compensation for National Council members, Nov. 17. The legislative branch also approved a resolution authorizing the Principal Chief to enter into an agreement regarding the naming of the Expo Center on the Tulsa Fairgrounds.

• TR 12-158 A tribal resolution of the MCN amending TR-152 (A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a naming rights and sponsorship agreement with the Tulsa County Public Facilities authority regarding the naming rights of the Expo Center at the Tulsa State Fairgrounds in Tulsa, Okla.). Sponsor: Alexander. Approved 15-0.

• TR 12-159 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a separate memorandum of understanding with seven Oklahoma counties for the maintenance of roadways/bridges

SEE NOVEMBER - 3

Stone Blade Restaurant opens at Okmulgee Country Club

MCN hosts ribbon-cutting ceremony for Stone Blade Restaurant and Bar

Sterling Cospier
MNN Reporter

OKMULGEE — A ribbon-cutting ceremony and press conference was held for the opening of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) Okmulgee Golf Club Stone Blade Restaurant and Bar, Dec. 6. The tribe purchased the club in May for \$3.6 million.

Muscogee Nation Business Enterprise (MNBE) CEO Woody Anderson, Principal Chief George Tiger and Second Chief Roger Barnett all spoke at the conference, which was followed by a ribbon-cutting at the restaurant. Anderson thanked the MCN administration, National Council and several MCN departments including: Tourism and Recreation, Facilities and



MNN/Darren DeLaune

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief George Tiger along with Second Chief Roger Barnett cut a ribbon officially opening Stone Blade Restaurant and Bar, part of the Okmulgee Country Club, Dec. 6.

Arbor Care for their assistance.

"When you see Creek Nation; it is a team effort that goes into it," Anderson said.

Part of the renovations in the kitchen and dining areas were done

with surplus materials from the MCN-owned Riverwalk Crossing in Jenks, Okla.

"This has been a journey for us to get this facility in order," Anderson said.

Stone Blade is open to the public and no club membership is required. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., for lunch and 5-10 p.m., for dinner. The menu features lunch and dinner items with side options, appetizers, deserts, salads and beverages including a wine list.

Anderson stated that the restaurant renovations are only the first step and his team is developing a master site plan.

"The biggest piece of this is really the golf course," he said.

Tiger stated that they are in the process of negotiating with a management group.

"They have done an evaluation of the golf course," he said.

Tiger shared his feelings about the ongoing renovations.

"Anything that is as historic as this golf course sometimes just needs TLC and that's what we see needs to be done with this facility," he said.



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Muscogee Nation
News to print
single edition in
December

Rebecca Landsberry
MNN Editor

OKMULGEE — Due to a technical issue, the *Muscogee Nation News* will publish a single edition during the month of December.

The MNN apologizes for the disruption in the print publication schedule; however, we encourage our readers to explore our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/muscogeenationnews if they haven’t yet done so for the latest in tribal and community news, events and multimedia coverage.

Thank you from all the staff for your continued support of the award-winning MNN and please do not hesitate to contact our office at 918-732-7720 for more information.

Happy holidays!



CAPITOL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Members of the executive and legislative branches attended including Principal Chief George Tiger with First Lady Frances Tiger, Second Chief Roger Barnett, National Council Speaker Sam Alexander and Second Speaker Robert Hufft as well as other representatives.

“Those forefathers and foremothers before us – our visionaries – they knew that this day would come... The Muscogee (Creek) Nation is proud to be here and share with you, our stories,” Tiger said.

Visitors at the festival were asked to sign a book at the entrance to the museum. Afterwards, their signatures reflected citizens, tourists and travelers from as far away as Asia and other parts of the world. These participants danced, talked with program representatives about the MCN and experience many aspects of Muscogee (Creek) culture featured throughout the event.

In an interview with Muscogee Nation News Reporter Sterling Cosper on day two of the event, co-coordinator and MCN Museum & Cultural Center Assistant Director Justin Giles said things went smoothly and that the anticipation for the turnout on day three was growing.

“The first two days have been phenomenal – nothing but a smooth operation here from loading and setting up – a lot of visitors coming in for the first two days, and really just a great time sharing our traditions, our culture and honoring our veterans for these past two days,” Giles said.

MCN Veteran Affairs Service Office Assistant Director Shawn Taryole spoke about the posters he worked to create for the ‘Native Words, Native Warriors’ banner exhibit highlighting Mvskoke veterans, which was displayed on the fourth floor of the museum during the event.

“We brought 20 of our banners from World War I all the way to the Iraq War as well as our Mvskoke women that served,” Taryole said.

Taryole said members of the Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard were available during the exhibit to answer questions from the public.

“Them being veterans themselves . . . give some insight to some of the banners and give their own personal take on it. We also have an Honor Guard banner as one of the 20,” Taryole said.

Each day, members of the Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard posted and retired colors at the beginning



MNN/Sterling Cosper

Members of the Duck Creek Ceremonial Ground performed stompdance demonstrations to for thousands of on-lookers during the Native American Heritage Month Family Celebration: Mvskoke Etlwv at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., Nov. 15-17.

and end of the festival. Members of the honor guard also spoke about their responsibilities and service during a panel on day two. Member Sam Bass gave an emotional account about his experience with the group and their role at Mvskoke funerals, where they provide recognition of deceased Mvskoke veterans’ military service.

“I called up my brothers here to help us out, so the Sac and Fox guys folded a flag for my dad and these guys [Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard] fired rifles for my dad. For that, I will be eternally grateful,” Bass said.

A cultural highlight of the event included members of Duck Creek Ceremonial Ground leading stompdance demonstrations. Painters, potters, stickball stick makers and other artists also displayed and sold their work to the public and answered questions about their crafts.

Muscogee (Creek) artist Dana Tiger said presenting these talents on an international level at the Smithsonian and showing that the Mvskoke are a living nation with language, culture and a unique identity is essential.

“We are still here. We are doing so many beautiful things. We’ve got so much to share,” Tiger said.

Cultural Interpreter and Cherokee citizen Rachael Cassidy said having the MCN at NMAI was a taste of Oklahoma.

“It’s great to see people from home. It really adds to what we’re able to share with the folks here in D.C. I’m excited that we’re honoring veterans right after Veterans Day. That’s an amazing opportunity for people here,” Cassidy said.

She responded with one word as to what she believes is the single most valuable thing in the museum.

“Knowledge. So thank you very much to our Creek brothers and sisters for coming out and sharing your culture, sharing your knowledge,” Cassidy said.

Muscogee (Creek) storyteller George Coser also immersed audiences of all ages in Mvskoke tales on the third floor. Children and adults listened as he recounted stories passed down to him from generations.

“Most of the stories I tell are from our tribe, the Muscogee (Creek), and it’s from the stories I’ve heard from grandma, grandpa, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends that have been given to me. So I’m passing them down,” Coser said.

Coser said the stories he tells are a mix of contemporary and tradition.

“We are oral storytelling people. That is a tradition that we’ve had a long time. If we don’t continue it, it’s going to be a lost art. No matter where you go, there’s always going to be someone telling a story. The best thing to do is listen,” Coser said.

The museum exhibits festival similar to Mvskoke Etlwv year-round, however, during Native American Heritage Month and the course of the three-day event, NMAI reported an increase in visitors, which totaled 12,538.

“During the month of November, we celebrate all these nations, showing off their banners or their flags, that have been gifted from the nations to the museum,” Scott said.

He said the MCN’s presence in Washington, D.C., was a meaningful experience for museum staff, patrons and tribal representatives.

“In addition to just educating our public, who are visitors from the local community, or the nation or the world, a lot of times when a Native nation celebrates a festival here, it gives people who belong to that Native nation but no longer live close by, like in Oklahoma or somewhere near there, a chance to reconnect with their culture,” Scott said.

Creek citizens honored with ‘Native American 40 Under 40’ awards

Media Release
Mvskoƙe Media

CATOOSA — Three Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizens were recognized Nov. 15 as recipients of the annual Native American 40 Under 40 award at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Catoosa, Okla.

The citizens honored were Justin Bruce Giles, Jason Salsman and Christina Good Voice, who are also employees of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Giles is the Assistant Director of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Museum and Cultural Center, Salsman is the Visual Media Supervisor for Mvskoƙe Media and Good Voice is the Manager of Mvskoƙe Media.

The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development introduced the Native American 40 Under 40 in 2009 to recognize emerging American Indian leaders between the ages of 18-39.

The awards are given to individuals “who have demonstrated leadership, initiative and dedication to achieve significant contributions in business, communities and Indian Country,” states a NCAIED media release.

Award winners were nominated and then selected by a panel of NCAIED representatives.

The NCAIED presented the honorees with their awards at the 37th annual Indian Progress in Business Awards Gala, a featured event of RES Oklahoma, a new



Mvskoƙe Media/Tyler Roberds

From left, Jason Salsman, Justin Giles and Christina Good Voice represented the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as citizens and employees when they were recognized with the ‘Native American 40 Under 40’ award Nov. 15.

two-day Reservation Economic Summit event that took place Nov. 14-15.

Giles said it was humbling to have been selected as a recipient of the award.

“Mvto to my wife, Cherrah Giles, my family and friends for keeping me in line and constantly supporting and encouraging me to

do good in this life,” Giles said. “I also congratulate and ‘high five’ the other Muscogee Nation staff who have received this recognition as well. I have a good feeling of pride for our Muscogee Nation and will respect and represent our traditions, culture and people as best as I can.”

Salsman said the award is a tes-

tament to the people who provide stability and support in his life, including his family and work family.

“This recognition would not be possible without each and every one of those people,” Salsman said. “Anytime you are recognized for the work you do on a day-to-day basis, it is a bit of a surprise. I think for me, I tend to get caught

up in the routine and daily grind of producing a weekly television program that you sometimes forget that there is an audience. When those that are watching see the result and recognize it as being significant, it is sometimes unexpected, but extremely gratifying.”

Salsman credits much of his success in his field of work to his tribe.

“A huge part of my success has been my tribe, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, having the vision and awareness to recognize the importance in bringing our stories and our news to the people through visual media,” he said. “I’m proud to say that we’re still the only tribe with a weekly show on network TV.”

Good Voice said she was honored to receive the award from the NCAIED, and that it was a great feeling to be among so many young, talented and driven American Indians.

“It was exciting to see so many young and accomplished Natives come together to be honored for their hard work, dedication and commitment to their tribes and communities,” Good Voice said. “I’m proud to say I’m in the ranks of the 40 Under 40 recipients, especially my colleagues Justin Giles and Jason Salsman. I look forward to seeing what great things we’ll all accomplish in the future.”

NOVEMBER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and associated rights-of-way constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Indian Reservation Roads Program. Sponsor: LaGrone; co-sponsor: Proctor. Approved 15-0.

- TR 12-160 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Indian Health Service (IHS) for satisfactory domestic water supply and adequate wastewater disposal facilities for 30 new or like-new Indian homes in Creek, Hughes, Mayes, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okfuskee, Rogers, Seminole, Tulsa, and Wagoner counties in Okla. Sponsor: Randolph. Approved 15-0.

- TR 12-161 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an agreement for the purchase of property located in Creek County, Okla. Sponsor: Randolph. Approved: 15-0.

- TR 12-162 A tribal resolution of the MCN supporting the Muscogee (Creek) Nation supporting the MCN Division of Health’s participation in a grant of the John T. Vucurevich Cancer Center and Native American Center Research Corporation titled “Using MHealth & Navigation to improve American Indian Cancer Quality of Life. Sponsor: Thomas. Approved 15-0.

- TR 12-163 A tribal resolution of the MCN supporting the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Division of Health’s participation in a grant of the Native American Cancer Research corporation titled, “Enhanc-

ing American Indian Cancer Prevention and Screening by Navigation and MHealth.” Sponsor: Thomas. Approved 15-0.

- TR 12-164 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of agreement between the nation and IHS for the employment of Amy D. Eden as commissioned personnel at the MCN Division of Health. Sponsor: Greene. Approved: 15-0.

- TR 12-165 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of agreement between the nation, the Federal Highway Administration and the Alabama Department of Transportation for the preservation and protection of human remains, property or archeological artifacts discovered during the construction of the Birmingham Northern Beltline at the Self Creek site. Sponsor: LaGrone. Approved: 15-0

- TR 12-166 A tribal resolution

of the MCN authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a partnership agreement between the Oklahoma Small Business Development Center (OSBDC) and the MCN. Sponsor: Hufft. Approved 15-0.

- TR 12-167 A tribal resolution of the MCN approving liquor and beer sales at the Stone Blade Restaurant and beer at the Okmulgee Golf Club. Sponsor: Nichols. Approved: 14-1, Johnson voting no.

- TR 12-168 A tribal resolution regarding a law suit of the MCN versus Salazar on the Cobell settlement. Sponsor: Alexander. Motion to postpone indefinitely failed 15-0.

- TR 12-169 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a separate AT&T ILEC Plexar pricing schedule/confirmation of service order with AT&T for three separate MCN Division of Health facilities. Sponsor: Hill, co-sponsors Jones III, Coachman, Ade. Approved 15-0.

- TR 12-170 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing a donation of \$25,000 to Two Rivers Native American Training Center. Sponsor: Hufft. 15-0.

- NCA 12-201 A law of the MCN clarifying appropriations to the Euchee United Cultural Historical Education Effort, Inc. (E.U.C.H.E.E.) for the Euchee language preservation project. Sponsor: Barnett. Motion to postpone approved: 15-0.

- NCA 12-203 A law of the MCN authorizing a donation of \$8,000 to the organization “ECHO.” Sponsor: Proctor, co-sponsors: Thomas, Randolph, Barnett. Motion to postpone approved 11 yes, 4 no. Barnett, Johnson, Proctor, and Randolph voting no.

- NCA 12-223 A law of the MCN amending MCNCA Title 30, chapter 4, entitled “Compensation of National Council.” Sponsor: Alexander; co-sponsors Ade, Greene. Approved 10-5, Hill, Hufft, Johnson, Proctor and Bea-

ver voting no.

- NCA 12-224 A law of the MCN approving an amendment to the 2013 Indian Housing Plan. Sponsor: LaGrone, co-sponsor: Proctor. Approved 15-0.

- NCA 12-225 A law of the MCN authorizing an appropriation of \$75,000 to provide Small Business entrepreneurial and economic development services to Muscogee Nation small business owners and new entrepreneurs through the partnership agreement with the Oklahoma Small Business Development Center (OKSBDC). Sponsor: Hufft Approved: 15-0.

- NCA 12-227 A law of the MCN authorizing a special appropriation of \$2,400 for unpaid funeral services of a Muscogee (Creek) citizen. Sponsor: Coachman. Approved: 15-0.

- NCA 12-228 A law of the MCN authorizing a special appropriation of \$2,730 to a Muscogee (Creek) citizen. Sponsor: Thomas. Approved: 15-0.

- NCA 12-229 A law of the MCN authorizing a special appropriation of \$400 to a Muscogee (Creek) youth. Sponsor: Coachman. Approved: 15-0.

- NCA 12-231 A law of the MCN authorizing a donation of \$1,000 to the Wild Wolf Singers Drum Group. Sponsor: Alexander, cosponsor: Proctor. Approved: 13-2. LaGrone, Johnson voting no.

- NCA 12-232 Supplemental funding to Environmental Services. Approved 15-0.

- NCA 12-233 Title 22, Chapter 10; voter registration. Approved 15-0.



MNN/Gary Fife

Muscogee veterans marched in support of legislation increasing compensation for National Council representatives during the Nov. 17 regular session at the MCN Mound Building.

Martel III helps Beggs Demons to championship

Gerald Wofford
MNN Sports Reporter

BEGGS — Saturday, Nov. 10 proved to be a special night for young Creek athlete Joe Martel III, when he and his teammates, the Beggs Gold 5th and 6th grade team captured the title in the local little league football division.

Beggs Gold defeated the Beggs Black team with a score of 19-0.

Martel helped his team complete a perfect season, going 10-0, with the use of prosthetic legs and continues to compete in other sports.

During the awards ceremony, Beggs Gold Head Coach Houston Spring hoisted the gold trophy that represented all that the team had worked for the entire season. The team understood that it was an effort on the part of everyone and the heart and determination of one young man reflected that.

“I wish I had more kids like him [Martel],” said Spring. “I’ve coached him through baseball, basketball, football and you couldn’t ask for a better kid with all the obstacles that he has had to face. If we all had the heart that he has, we would all be a lot more successful in life.”

Martel’s father, Joe, wanted to especially thank the Muscogee (Creek) for their help in getting the young Creek athlete his prosthetic legs back in August, “He worked all summer in the 105 degree heat and he knew what tonight was all about,” Martel said.

Joe had another reason to celebrate when his younger son, Me-ku-Sapv, or Red, as he is known, helped his first and second grade team win their division also.



MNN/Gerald Wofford

Pictured below Joe Martel Jr., and wife Kimberly, celebrate with their son, Joe Martel III, after winning his little league football division title.

Native teammates strengthen Glenpool football



MNN/Gerald Wofford

Pictured from left to right are Glenpool football teammates Caleb Bigpond, Zach Pollard, Christian Perez, Anthony Billie and Brendin Ballard.

Gerald Wofford
MNN Sports Reporter

GLENPOOL — Glenpool students Caleb Bigpond, Derek Hill, Christian Perez, Anthony Billie, Brendin Ballard, Zach Pollard, Dustin Chadwick and Joseph Looney are off to a good start in their pursuit of gridiron greatness. These Native American boys have played football together from first through seventh grade, during which, the Muscogee (Creek) and Yuchi athletes have compiled an impressive record of 56 wins to six losses.

They competed in the Indian Nations Football Conference, which includes Jenks, Broken Arrow and Owasso and is considered by many to be one of the best youth football leagues in the country.

The kids have been committed to their sport, spending the off-season attending football camps like Josh Heupel’s ‘Day of Champions’ during the summer. Glenpool running back Caleb Bigpond has even been invited to the ‘Day of Champions’ elite running back camp for the past three years by

former NFL Chicago Bears running back coach Earle Mosley.

The Indian athletes are committed to the Glenpool football program and plan to be teammates until they graduate high school. They just completed their seventh grade season, going undefeated.

The sixth grade team also had a no-loss record of 6-0 and the eighth grade team boasted a record of six wins and two losses.

Been signs with Mid-America Christian University

Darren DeLaune
MNN Sports Reporter

DEWAR — On Nov. 6, Mid-America Christian University women’s basketball coach Roman Owen added Muscogee (Creek) citizen Cheyenne Been to his squad for the 2013-2014 basketball season.

After signing with Mid-America, Been feels weight has been lifted off her shoulders and now she can focus on her last season as a Lady Dragon for her basketball team.

“We are looking pretty good for this season,” Been said. “We are older and we have matured a lot. I think that is the biggest thing. We have been good but we were young. This year we will be a lot more mature and a lot more experienced and that will be good for us.”

Like her teammates, Been, feels that there is “Unfinished Business” for the high-powered squad in the upcoming season.

“This year we want to make it to the state tournament,” said Been. “Everybody wants to win but you have to get there first. We definitely want to win but our goal is to get to state. We always get very close, but it never falls our way. Something always keeps happening to us.”

The Dewar Lady Dragons have won three consecutive district championships and three straight conference titles from the 2010-12 seasons. They also won back-to-back Okmulgee County Tournament titles.

With Dewar ranked number four in Class A this pre-season, making it to state and winning state are possibilities Been hopes are very strong.

I think if we can peak at the right time, we can make it there and win it,” said Been. “I want to be able to walk off the floor this year knowing I did everything possible. I want to say I left it all on the court. I want to be able to become as good as I can be. I do not want to have any ‘what-ifs’ for this year. What if I did it this way, or what if I did it that way. I am tired of ‘what-ifs.’”

Been is very happy she will be close to home and have a scholarship waiting for her when she enrolls next year at Mid-America. Been had other schools such as UCO, Utah State, and Connors State Col-

lege looking at her, but felt that Mid-America was the best fit for her.

“The coaches made me feel that they wanted me,” Been said. “They made it known that they wanted me and that stuck out with me. They did not want to see how I did throughout the season and then sign me. They wanted to sign me now. And when I visited the campus—it is a small campus—and I come from a small school so I did not want a culture shock.

Been is also a standout in softball which she will play in addition to basketball for next year.

“With high school I can play anywhere, except pitcher and catcher,” said Been. “They had me work out at both shortstop and outfield when I tried out with them (Mid-America). The coach thinks I can play better at shortstop.” Been said.

Been wants to major in secondary education with an emphasis on history. She wants to become a coach after her college career.

“I am a concurrent student,” said Been. “I will be graduating high school with 36 college hours so I will be graduating as a college freshman. They told me at the rate I am going, I could graduate with my masters in four years. I’m looking into mastering in counseling and psychology and going back into that field.”

Been’s father and coach, Todd Been, is ready for this upcoming season, but knows it is a bittersweet moment for him and this last year coaching his daughter.

“It is a relief that she has signed,” Todd Been said. “She wanted the opportunity to play both softball and basketball, and Mid-America is giving her that chance to do that. Seeing all the hours that she has put in and the reward she gets for all the hard work. It is very nice and I’m very happy for her.”

Cheyenne Been has some words to say to the younger generation athletes.

“Don’t let somebody tell you, ‘you are too small to play sports,’” she said.

Been (Muscogee) is the daughter of Todd and Jean Ann Been. Her clan is Nokose (Bear) and tribal town is Thlopthlocco.



Okmulgee Daily Times/Larry Owen

Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen Cheyenne Been (center front) signed a letter of intent to play basketball for Mid-America Christian University in 2013.

Learning the language, regaining culture: Weeks 9-11

Gary Fife
MNN Editorial Assistant

OKMULGEE — WEEK 9: Naken estomecka?—What are you doing?

I’m writing my language diary. (That part I can’t write in Creek, yet.)

This is the kind of phrase our class is working on, the useful, common everyday phrase that gets you fed, finds the restroom or helps to answer many basic questions.

Our major exercise for the day was to take another test to use the knowledge we’ve been taught so far to try and figure out some of these phrases. We had the chance to look over eight—cenvpaken phrases in Creek and match them up with the correct English translations. This one was kind of fun because it covered useful material that wasn’t too complicated to learn quickly.

Kerrvks—I don’t know. That’s a word I am going to find useful.

Mvto vmvhicetkat—thank you for helping me. That’s another phrase that is just a bit of a tongue-twister, but will get used a lot as the class moves along. I try to remember the ‘action’ word usually follows the ‘subject.’ (By the way, I need to correct an English language phrase I wrote in an earlier diary: you conjugate verbs, not vowels.)

“Vn punayet cv?” is a phrase we learned that reminded me of the movie “Taxi Driver.” Remember when actor Robert DiNiro was looking at his mirror saying “Are you talking to me?” I instantly wondered what that would have sounded like in Mvskoke, “Vn punayet cv? Vn punayet cv? There’s nobody else here. Vn punayet cv?” (With a New York accent, too). Anyway.

We’ve worked more on numbers, concentrating on the month, day and year. I think I need to check back with Daria Hicks to make sure I’ve not gotten them mixed up.

It is now “Ehole—Frost Month, November.” It’s heading for the month of ‘Rvfo Rakko—Big Winter, December,’ in the season of ‘Rvfo—winter.’ It’s been an interesting nine—ostvpaken weeks so far. I think about the things I’ve learned so far and what that represents to me. It’s made me think more about what the Mvskoke words would be when I speak to someone in English. I feel good that those Mvskoke words aren’t too far from my memory and from use in conversation. I must admit, though, I still have to refer to my written materials a lot. But, acvfvckes—I am happy. I’ll leave you with this one you might find useful sometime: “estvn cukoce oca—where are the restrooms?”

WEEKS 10-11: Our class took a break over the Thanksgiving holiday. Mid-November sort of felt like the breaks we used to get in school. It was nice, but it was also a time to be distracted and off-schedule for the language lesson discipline. I ate lots of penwv—turkey, but not as much studying got done as it should have. It was much easier to power-snooze on the couch.

But, in a way, it worked out. I did try with some success at using Mvskoke and understanding it when I heard some. The easiest was watching the Muscogee (Creek) Nation public service announcements on TV. They usually contain a Mvskoke phrase at the end.

I heard “hvtvm cehecares” and I got excited, “Hey! I know that,” was my reaction. My wife asked me what it meant and I beamed: “I will see you again.” I know, for Mvskoke speakers, this would sound kind of silly, but I felt like I had achieved something—bringing classroom study into everyday life—in my own traditional language. Baby steps, yes—but you’ve got to take small steps in order to walk.

A Chinese proverb says, “Every journey of 10 thousand miles begins with a single step.” (At least I think it was Chinese.)

During this period, I had a newspaper assignment to cover the National Council in mid-November—Ehole—Frost Month. Meetings have the usual invocation with a hymn and its lyrics are shown on the overhead projector. It was great to be able to at least read and pronounce many of the words even if I didn’t understand most of them. That felt good as well as being educational. One additional thing about this meeting was that Alex Buck, the assistant pastor at Wetumka church gave the invocation and he doesn’t speak English, only Mvskoke. I only got a word here and there, but I felt like that was a small accomplishment.

I didn’t make to the Week 11 class. A head cold kept me at home. I missed out on learning names for fruits and vegetables and an all-important review of conversational phrases. I guess I’ll go to the food distribution center and read their signs. Many foods have placards that give the names in Mvskoke. I don’t think they have a phrase for ‘spaghetti sauce’ in Mvskoke yet, or, at least, they didn’t when I visited there earlier this year.

Week 12 had us learn new words and phrases that added to our ability to stretch our conversational wings a bit more. In our exercise, I chose the number seven—ku lv pa ken.

The phrase is: “Oske waste tos.” That translates to: “It is drizzling.” I’m sure this Oklahoma drought will let up and give me a chance to use that phrase from time to time.

Media assignments seem to give me the most opportunities to use the Mvskoke language. Recently, I covered the Women’s Health Summit in Holdenville. They were plenty of chances to use the greetings. But, there was an exchange with an elder lady that really made me feel like all the weeks of attendance and learning Mvskoke were paying off. After the usual formalities, she asked me what my name was—‘naket cehocefkvte?’ It took me a second to let it sink in: I understood what she had asked.

‘Gary Fife cvhocefkv tos’ was my grateful reply. Grateful because,

even though this lady didn’t know it, she ushered me into the world of those who could use Mvskoke to communicate in the everyday world. It was a single step, but I felt like it was that first step on the 10,000 mile journey.

Recognizing that I still face more than 9,999 miles on the rest of that long journey, I will continue to attend classes and try to learn much more Mvskoke. I realize that I may never be fluent, but I will feel much better that I can contribute to the

numbers of Mvskoke speakers and do what I can to help preserve our traditional language.

But, I’m doing this for my own personal satisfaction, too. I feel that my threadbare cultural fabric isn’t so threadbare any more.

This is the last entry in my diary of my linguistic experience. I plan to keep attending classes, but there’s no sense in repeating here, what I’m learning. I think those readers who have followed my little epic get the idea by now. I’m hop-

ing that somebody else will decide to take their first step in learning our Mvskoke. It is not easy, but it is worth it.

The language program estimated that there are only 5,030 speakers left. I will do my best to make that go up to 5,031.

Our class motto: “Mvskoke opunvkv kerri nowat esvcavfe ke tares.”

“When I learn my Mvskoke language, I will be happy.”

Mvto. Hvtvm cehecares.

MCN artist participates in photography exhibit

Muscogee (Creek) artist Hotvlkuce Harjo contributed several photos to a photography exhibit the Autry National Center in Los Angeles, Calif.

Sterling Cospers
MNN Reporter

LOS ANGELES — Muscogee (Creek) artist Hotvlkuce (Ha•dul•go•gee) Harjo contributed five photos to the “InSight: Indigenous Youth, Digital Images and Violence Prevention Photography Exhibit” on display at the Autry National Center in Los Angeles, Calif., through November 2013.

The exhibit, featuring photos from seven young Native American artists from different tribes, was a collaborative effort between the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Gender Studies Department and the American Indian Studies Center.

“I heard about the program through a friend of my mother’s. She thought it was perfect for me since I am Native and into photography,” Hotvlkuce Harjo said.

The participating artists came up with the following five themes to help focus their work: where we come from, life, things we want to ignore, ways to avoid violence and freestyle.

Hotvlkuce (Little Wind in Mvskoke) Harjo grew up in Tahlequah and spent a lot of time in Sapulpa and Okmulgee where many of her family members live.

“That’s where I learned my language, traditions and my culture,” she said.

She later moved to Los Angeles, Calif., after her mother was accepted into the doctoral program at the University of Southern California (USC).

“Los Angeles is where I flourished as an artist,” she said.

According to her grandmother Ellen Harjo, Hotvlkuce Harjo has always been artistically inclined.

“She has been drawing since she could hold a pen-



MNN/Sterling Cospers

Pictured is Muscogee (Creek) artist Hotvlkuce Harjo (above) and a sample of her work as a photographer (below).

cil. When she graduated last year she didn’t know what she wanted to do. Her granddad told her, ‘you know what you want to do, what you’ve always done; you’re an artist,’ ” Ellen Harjo said.

Hotvlkuce Harjo is majoring in studio arts with an emphasis in photography at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, N.M., where she is already making an impression, according to her grandfather Duke Harjo.

“She’s doing really well. She is an ‘A’ student. Her professor asked her who she trained with before she came to art school and she said

‘nobody,’ ” Duke Harjo said.

While Hotvlkuce Harjo may have been untrained before entering art school, she certainly has no problem teaching others.

“When she was in California, they would have these workshops for young kids. She used to go out there to volunteer her time to teach those kids how to draw and paint,” Duke Harjo said.

Ellen Harjo expressed her feelings about her granddaughter’s success.

“We’re really proud of her,” she said.



Buck preaches sermons in Mvskoke language

Muscogee (Creek) citizen Alex Buck speaks only Mvskoke

Darren DeLaune
MNN Sports Reporter

WETUMKA—At the National Council session on Nov. 17, Associate Pastor Alex Buck opened with a song and prayer in the Mvskoke language. What a lot of people may not know is that he only speaks Mvskoke, peppered with very few English words here and there.

Buck, 81, grew up outside of Wetumka, Okla., where he did not go to school because of a disability. He is blind in one eye and was raised by his mother, Bella Wesley, until her passing when he was five. From then on, he lived with his grandparents, Jennie (Hopiye) and Daniel Wesley. When they passed, his aunt Abbie (Wesley) Coachman took care of him.

Through his translator, his cousin Lucinda Coachman, Buck explained his youth.

“I did not go to school growing up,” Buck said. “My parents and my grandmother taught me how to speak Creek and taught me what I needed to learn.

Some that grow up where other languages are spoken instead of their primary language that you



MNN/Darren DeLaune

Pastor Alex Buck preaches to members of the congregation of Wetumka Indian Baptist Church.

are used too, have difficulty adapting. This was not the case for Buck. When he was growing up, everyone spoke Creek around his house. Even in town, people spoke a little bit of Creek so they were able to talk to him. The ones that did not speak Creek learned, so they could carry a conversation with him.

“I had friends who were white,” Buck said. “They knew that I only spoke Creek so they learned some of the language so we could still play together.”

Buck became a member of Wetumka Indian Baptist Church in 1946. Since that time, Buck has served in many areas throughout

the church. He has served as acting and ordained deacon, head deacon, ordained minister and pastor. Buck has preached many sermons at numerous churches over the years.

“He rarely misses church,” Coachman said. “Every once in a while he might miss a Sunday. There was a duration of about four months that he missed church because of an illness, back in 2006. When he was well enough to come back to the church, he stood in front of the congregation and asked everyone for forgiveness because of his absence.”

Most people who have blindness

use the tactile system called Braille to be able to read. The Braille system is writing and printing for blind or visually impaired people, in which varied arrangements of raised dots representing letters and numerals are identified by touch. In Buck’s case, he was never taught braille nor did he have a special Bible made for him. He teaches himself by having someone read to him what part of the Bible he wishes to talk about. He listens and memorizes and prays so he will be prepared for the sermon he preaches to members of his church.

“He will tell us what he would like to preach about, or what cer-

tain part of the Bible he wants to talk about,” Coachman said. “We will read it to him and that is how he picks it up. He also has tapes on preaching about the Holy Bible and that helps him to learn and prepare also.”

Buck does not have an interpreter during his sermons. His whole sermon is spoken only in Mvskoke. While some do find it difficult to understand some parts of his preaching, Buck feels that the Holy Spirit is there with everyone and that helps the congregation understand what he is saying.

“There are some members that probably do not understand,” Buck said. “Sometimes it is difficult to explain what I’m trying to preach. I feel that if the Holy Spirit is there among us, they do understand what is being said.”

Buck knows the language is in danger of losing fluent speakers. He offers some advice to help preserve the language.

“We need to talk Creek every chance that we get,” Buck said. “We need to talk to each other in Creek. If we do not do this, our language will fade out.”

Buck offered advice for all churches throughout the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

“If all the churches continue to work and pray,” Buck said. “Then we will overcome any obstacle that is in front of us.”

Buck’s Tribal Town is Tukvpttce and his clan is Sweet Potato.

Health Summit travels to Holdenville

Annual MCN Division of Health event makes southern route

Gary Fife
MNN Editorial Assistant

HOLDENVILLE — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) brought its annual Women’s Health Summit to this southern part of the nation, Nov. 30 to focus on health issues facing Creek women in the Holdenville area.

Sponsored by the Community Health Representative program, several dozen attendees heard presentations on services available to them through the Health Department and other community resource groups. Vendors share information on diabetes, tobacco use cessation and other topics of particular interest to Native women.

According to MCN Secretary of Health Lt. Seneca Smith, they’re trying to serve Muscogee women in all parts of the tribal jurisdiction, “We’re trying to cover all ages, all areas, so we can make them aware and alert on what’s out there, what’s new and, mainly, answer whatever questions they may have. Education is the key today.”

To effectively serve the tribe, Smith said it was critical that all parts of the Muscogee Nation had these summits, “We have 11 counties to cover. What we try to do is focus on each area so that



MNN/Gary Fife

Participants received health information as part of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Division of Health’s Women’s Health Summit Nov. 30 in Holdenville, Okla.

each citizen can get an opportunity to ask whatever questions they may have. It gives us an opportunity to educate also.” Combatting diabetes is one priority for all areas, Smith said. The location of this community made a huge difference, he said, in whether or not these local Muscogee women were receiving the education and care they needed.

In listening to the attendees, Smith noted that care of elders was on the minds of this group. “Elder-care kind of stuck out quite a bit today. I heard that quite a lot from those I spoke to, today. I’m glad we got a jump-start on that.”

Anna Marshall delivered the morning address. She concentrated on the subjects of Native spirituality and identity She emphasized how important those ideas are to women’s overall well-being, “Now that we have broadened ourselves, we’re not just a woman ‘locally,’ we’re a world of woman now, so we’ve expanded our boundaries, we’ve expanded our horizons, we’ve expanded our exposure to

the world. To do that, we need to have a strong spiritual sense of who we are and we also need to have a strong identity. That gets challenged all the time and in all places.”

She pointed out that she was not speaking of either Christian or traditional beliefs, but it was important to have some kind of spiritual elements in Native women’s lives. She said, it was the resource that has helped Native women overcome the challenges of today, “Spirituality has gotten us through struggles, it has helped us overcome the struggles and the barriers placed in front of us by the dominant society as well as sometimes, even ourselves. We want to be healthy, but we want to be healthy spiritually.”

The fourth annual Health Summit wrapped up with a light show and an opportunity for participants to interact with vendors and educators.

Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive feeds Muscogee families

Sterling Cosper
MNN Reporter

OKMULGEE — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) National Council hosted their fifth annual Thanksgiving Food Drive Nov. 14 and 16.

National Council representatives and staff, local businesses, MCN employees, citizens and subsidiaries all contributed to the drive, which saw its biggest year to date with a total 135 baskets donated to Muscogee (Creek) citizens in need.

Business owners in Okmulgee contributed food. Donors including: Muscogee Nation Business Enterprise, National Council Attorney Zeke Fletcher and Creek Nation Casino Checotah gave monetary contributions and MCN citizens and employees gave food and money to help fill the baskets.

Employees from several MCN departments and institutions including: Arbor Care, Children and Family and Senior Services as well as Geospatial, Higher Education, the Emergency Management Response Team and the Office of the Principal Chief all volunteered their time to put together and distribute the baskets.

Former National Council At-

torney Yonne Tiger, who now represents the MCN administration, previously coordinated the event.

“She was the one that was instrumental in it going to the next level,” MCN National Council Speaker Sam Alexander said.

The Women’s Caucus of the Council orchestrated this year’s drive.

“It would have been very easy for them to say, ‘well Yonne is gone, we did it last year,’ but they didn’t do that; they did it themselves,” Alexander said.

Ade credited the Council staff for helping the Women’s Caucus coordinate the drive.

“They really did a lot of the work...it was a combined effort,” she said.

According to Alexander, the staff began planning around September.

“Boxes started coming in around October,” he said. “They really had this down to an art form.”

This was National Council Secretary Kristie Sewell’s first year participating.

“It was a lot of work...it just gave me a warm feeling in my heart to help a family like that,” Sewell said.



Photo submitted by MCN/National Council staff

Mona ‘KoKo’ Lowe with the Tribal Employment and Rights Office (left) and Anjanette Coker with the MCN Department of Higher Education (right) wrap baskets given to MCN citizens in need, as part of the National Council’s Thanksgiving Food Drive.



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OKMULGEE DISTRICT

In re the marriage of SAYTON,
Jana R. Slayton,
Petitioner,
vs.
John R. Slayton,
Respondent.

DISTRICT COURT
FILED
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR DECEMBER 2012

MCN REINTEGRATION PROGRAM TO HOST 4TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

HENRYETTA — The MCN Reintegration Program (RIP) is having its 4th annual Holiday Toy Drive to ensure that children with incarcerated family members have gifts for the holidays.

For more information, including drop off sites call 918-652-2676.

MCN T & R HOSTS COAT DRIVE THROUGH DEC. 20

OKMULGEE — Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tourism & Recreation is now accepting new or gently used coats of all sizes, hats, gloves and scarves.

Donations may be dropped off at the T & R offices located at the main complex at the MCN and will be cleaned before being distributed to those in need.

For more information, call 918-732-7992.

WEWOKA INDIAN UMC TO HOST CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DEC. 23

YEAGER — Wewoka Indian United Methodist Church, located just north of Yeager, will host a Christmas program Dec. 23 beginning at 3 p.m. Everyone is invited to come celebrate Christmas and spend the day at church. Morning services will begin at 11 a.m.

For more information, contact Ryan Smith at: Ryan.Smith@bia.gov.

HOMEMADE PIES AVAILABLE FOR HOLIDAY PURCHASE

OKEMAH — Mvskoke elder

Carol Tiger is selling a variety of homemade pies for the holidays.

All pies except pecan are \$7 a piece including order and delivery. Pecan Pies are \$9 and cobblers are \$10.

For more information call Tiger at 918-716-8267.

NEW YEARS EVE SOBRIETY POW-WOW SET FOR DEC. 31

TULSA — The Friends of Sobriety is hosting the 12th annual New Years Eve Sobriety Pow-wow Dec. 31 at 100 Civic Center in downtown Tulsa.

The event is free to the public. For more information contact Lorraine Bosin at 918-639-7999 or Karl Beaston at 918-832-1981.

MVSKOKE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROGRAM TO HOST COMMUNITY MEETINGS STARTING JAN. 8

WETUMKA — The Mvskoke Language Revitalization Program will host community meetings beginning Jan. 8, 2013 from 6-7 p.m., at the MCN Southern Regional Office located at 333 S. Washita in Wetumka, Okla.

A second meeting will be held Jan. 15, 2013 from 6-7 p.m., at the Glenpool Indian Community Center located at 13839 S. Casper, Glenpool, Okla.

MVSKOKE LANGUAGE CLASSES TO START JAN. 14 IN WELEETKA

WELEETKA — Mvskoke language classes will be offered at the Weleetka Indian Community Center beginning Jan. 14-15 from 6-8 p.m. Classes are free and open

to the community.

For more information, please call 918-732-7724.

CMN AND MCN TO HOST 'COLLEGE GOAL SUNDAY' FEB. 10

OKMULGEE — The College of the Muscogee Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Employment & Training Administration and Higher Education will host College Goal Sunday Feb. 10, 2013 from 2- 4 p.m. The registration deadline to attend is Jan. 25.

High school seniors, other adults and their families can receive assistance in applying for financial aid for college or technical school, obtain information about services offered by the MCN, meet with representatives from local schools and win prizes.

MCN TRIBAL DRIVEWAYS PROGRAM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

OKMULGEE — The Tribal Driveways Program is accepting applications for repair of accessible driveways for property owners who reside within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation boundaries. Applicant must be enrolled with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation tribe.

Organization applications are also available for Muscogee (Creek) Nation ceremonial grounds, tribal towns, community centers, churches and when needed, family cemeteries that are within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation boundaries.

For more information or to request an application call 918-732-7651 or 1-800-482-1979.



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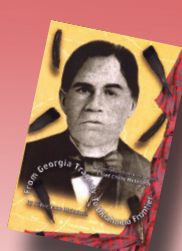
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